

SYNOPSIS OF THE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ILLICIT TRAFFICKING OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL

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The Nuclear Smuggling International Technical Working Group (ITWG) was established one year ago at an International Conference on Nuclear Smuggling Forensic Analysis. The purpose of the ITWG is to address scientific and technical issues related to preventing illicit trafficking of nuclear materials, with an initial focus on nuclear forensics. In this paper a synopsis is presented of the second ITWG meeting that was held in Obninsk, Russia, on December 2-4, 1996. The Workshop included 57 participants from 15 countries and 2 international organizations. An overview talk established the significance of the Moscow Summit in which nuclear forensics was identified as one component of the program to combat illicit trafficking of nuclear materials. From the law enforcement community, the FBI and UK Police presented their protocols for responding to a scene in which nuclear materials were present. Updates were given by the U.S. and E.A.U. on activities since the last workshop: the details of a U.S. Nuclear Forensics Domestic Exercise were presented, and the E.A.U. reported on action levels of forensic analysis and offered assistance to other countries. Collaborations between VNIINM and ITU include the establishment of a forensics laboratory at VNIINM and the development of a joint databank that is specifically designed for nuclear forensics. Four papers on analytical techniques were presented, one each by IPPE Obninsk, VNIIEF Sarov, VNIITF Snjezhinsk and Khlopin Institute St. Petersburg. The Russian Ministry of Interior reported on recent cases of criminal attempts to obtain nuclear materials, and Russian Customs outlined their needs and suggested possible areas where the ITWG could help. A panel discussion on an interlaboratory exercise (round robin) that will include both Pu and HEU samples covered the steps that need to be taken by each participant in order to receive a sample; it was agreed that an official letter of invitation would be shortly issued that would further document the shipping requirements.

The meeting culminated by reaching agreement on the next steps for the ITWG. It was agreed that a new draft of the terms of reference for the ITWG should be prepared for consideration by authorized bodies of the participating countries. Second, a more specific scientific and technical program should be developed for preventing illicit trafficking of nuclear materials. Third, LLNL, ITU, and Minatom should prepare a summary of the meeting and present it to this MPC&A Conference. Fourth, the agenda for the next meeting was tentatively outlined, including discussion on the development of forensic databases and expanding the ITWG to include detection of transport of illicit nuclear materials. The feasibility of holding the meeting in conjunction with a conference in Italy on illicit trafficking will be investigated.

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